

April 18, 2006

Lynn Scarlett
Acting U.S. Secretary of the Interior
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Lynn,

I'm writing regarding your trip yesterday to tour our levees and the subsequent comments that were attributed to you in various papers across the state. As you well know, we continue to face potentially catastrophic levee failure in California that could result in billions of dollars in property loss and God-forbid, loss of lives. That crisis is as real today as it was in January 2005 when Governor Schwarzenegger released his recommendations on California flood management and protection.

Some of the comments attributed to you, including an inference that our levees are not in need of immediate repair and that, "...a crisis could re-emerge if the 'perfect storm' hits," are of serious concern to all Californians. This crisis remains very real now, without any additional storms. The snow pack is greater than it's been in years and the recent storms have left California in a virtual deluge, taxed our dams and filled our reservoirs to the brink. Hundreds of miles of levees are saturated to their limit and ready to give way. That you are attributed suggesting otherwise is deeply troubling.

Last month, Governor Schwarzenegger asked President Bush to declare a state of emergency and provide emergency assistance to repair 24 critical erosion sites in California. As you know, a federal declaration of emergency would immediately allow the state to expedite our urgently needed levee repairs and help prevent a disaster before the next flood season.

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Following the state declaration of emergency, and when no help came, Governor Schwarzenegger traveled to Washington. Working with the state's congressional delegation, the Governor has intensified efforts to obtain regulatory relief and federal funding for levee repairs in the Central Valley and Delta.

California is moving forward to protect our people in the hope that federal support will be forthcoming.

I look forward to talking with you about California's levee crisis soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Chrisman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mike Chrisman
Secretary for Resources